

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-11 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 L-03 H-02 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 /093 W
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R 270809Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1573

INFO USDEL MTN GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANILA 1357

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EGEN ETRD RP

SUBJECT: US/PHIL ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS - VIRATA REPORTEDLY OPTS
FOR POSTPONEMENT

REF: MANILA 17785, MANILA 946

1. NEWSPAPER "BUSINESS DAY" IN JANUARY 26 STORY (SUBSEQUENTLY
PICKED UP BY AP) QUOTES FINANCE SECRETARY VIRATA TO EFFECT
THAT ECONOMIC TALKS WITH U.S. SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL
AFTER U.S. ELECTIONS ON GROUNDS THAT PRE-ELECTION PERIOD
IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE
REACH VIRATA FOR COMMENT OWING TO HIS PREOCCUPATION--AND
THAT OF OTHER SENIOR GOP OFFICIALS--WITH GROUP 77 MEETING.
IN SUBSEQUENT CHECK WITH "BUSINESS DAY", HOWEVER, WE WERE
INFORMED THAT VIRATA MADE REMARKS TO REPORTER AT COCKTAIL
PARTY JANUARY 21. VIRATA EXPRESSED NO SUCH RESERVATIONS
IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH E/C COUNSELOR DURING LATTER'S
COURTESY CALL JANUARY 22. ALTHOUGH HE VOLUNTEERED LITTLE
ON SUBJECT, HE AGREED WITH OBSERVATION THAT , IF TALKS ARE
TO BE HELD IN LATE MARCH AS PRESENTLY ENVISAGED, GOP
SHOULD RESPOND TO EMBASSY NOTE (MANILA 946) AT EARLY
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OPPORTUNITY.

2. COMMENT: TO THE EXTENT THAT VIRATA WAS QUOTED
CORRECTLY, WE BELIEVE HIS REMARKS CONSTITUTE A REITERATION
OF PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED PERSONAL RESERVATIONS (MANILA 17785)
RATHER THAN OFFICIAL GOP POSITIONS WHICH SO FAR APPARENTLY
REMAINS THAT TALKS SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN MARCH. WE WILL
CONTINUE TO SEEK CLARIFICATION.
SULLIVAN

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